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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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Ms Rachel Heffer
Headteacher
Perran-Ar-Worthal Community Primary School
School Hill
Perranwell Station
Truro
Cornwall
TR3 7LA

Dear Ms Heffer

Short inspection of Perran-Ar-Worthal Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 21 February 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in October 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. A strong family ethos permeates all aspects of school life and your cohesive team members work effectively together. However, there is no complacency. You and your governors have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and take swift action when improvements are needed.

The significant staff turnover since the previous inspection, including your own appointment as headteacher, has ensured that the areas identified as requiring improvement have been effectively tackled. Pupils, including the most able, are challenged more in their work because it is well planned to meet all the differing needs and age groups. All teachers consistently follow the agreed marking and feedback policy and this ensures that pupils receive the guidance they need to improve their work. You have provided a wealth of professional development opportunities for your teaching staff, and this has enabled them to increase their confidence and expertise. By regularly looking at workbooks, visiting lessons and scrutinising teachers' planning, senior and middle leaders carefully check that there is a consistency of approach in each classroom. Consequently, strong pupil progress is maintained throughout the school.

Nearly all parents who responded to Parent View, the online inspection questionnaire, would not hesitate to recommend the school. They explained that

their children were happy and safe at school. Most parents also felt that their children were making effective progress because they were taught well. One parent summed up the views of the majority by explaining that 'we are more than happy with the way the school not only equips our children with their educational needs but also rounds them as people'.

Safeguarding is effective.

Pupils report that they feel safe in school and know that they can share worries or concerns with any of the adults who work there. Pupils talk with conviction about keeping safe when using new technologies and know that they must not give out personal information online as 'you might as well just open your door and say come on in and hurt me'.

Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff and governors have completed all relevant training, including the prevention of extremism, radicalisation, female genital mutilation and child sexual exploitation. Any unreported absences or patterns of non-attendance are carefully checked and monitored to ensure that all pupils are safe and not in any danger if away from school. Nevertheless, you and your governors are fully aware that recruitment and vetting records need to be maintained in a more orderly and systematic way, and require regular assessment.

Inspection findings

- We agreed that my first line of enquiry would be to check that you and your teachers had tackled the weaknesses highlighted in the most recent Year 6 national test results. Your new subject leader for mathematics swiftly analysed the outcomes of these tests. She identified that pupils lacked the confidence to recall and apply their mathematical skills rapidly under test conditions. Because pupils are set timed tasks where they practise working at greater speed to recall basic mathematics concepts, they have gained greater confidence in identifying what method they need to solve a problem. The skilful way in which teachers consistently plan lessons, meeting not only the needs of the mixed age group classes but also stretching and challenging the most able pupils, has successfully ensured that all groups are making better progress. Those most able Year 6 pupils who are working at a greater than expected depth of learning for their age benefit from additional mathematics lessons at the local secondary school. Taught by a mathematics specialist, these sessions enable the pupils to extend and challenge their thinking further.
- We also agreed that I would confirm whether pupils continue to make strong progress in Years 1 and 2. Current pupils' reading and writing skills reflect the consistently above average scores in the end of Year 1 phonics checks and the strong progress they make from the early years. By making skilful use of well-qualified and effective teaching assistants, you ensure that the Year 1 pupils who are in the same class as the Reception children make similar progress to that of those who share a class with Year 2.
- Given that there was a dip in the proportion of children who reached a good level

of development in the 2016 early years national tests, I explored with you the reasons why this had occurred. A small, but significant, minority of this cohort started school with poorly developed social and emotional skills. You and the governors know that the early years provision does not always lend itself to fully meeting the needs of all children. In particular, the outdoor learning area is not used effectively to engage children who need to have a more practical approach to learning. This issue has a high profile in your school improvement plan and visits have been undertaken to support the development. However, you are fully aware that there is some way to go to improve the outdoor provision to ensure that all children can develop and extend their key learning skills.

- Finally, I agreed to look at some of the innovative ways in which you tailor your teaching so that pupils consistently develop their knowledge and skills across the curriculum. Pupils in Key Stage 2 make impressive progress in history, geography and science because they are taught by subject specialists in discrete year groups during afternoon sessions. In addition to this, the weekly 'Fabulous Fridays' activities, enjoyed by Years 1 to 6, focus on developing the pupils' creative skills in art, design and technology, music, modern foreign languages and physical education. This ensures that they receive a very well-rounded approach to their education. The introduction of an 'energiser activity', which all pupils carry out when they arrive at school, also ensures that they get daily opportunities to write at length about any topic they choose.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the early years outdoor area is developed to provide challenging activities and effective teaching support which engage the children in their learning and help them to extend their thinking
- administrative systems for recording the recruitment and vetting of staff are reorganised so that they are orderly and can be regularly checked for consistency.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Cornwall. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lorna Brackstone
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and we talked about the improvements that had been made since the last inspection. I also considered your self-evaluation of the school's effectiveness. I looked at all safeguarding records and explored your recruitment and vetting procedures. I held a discussion with two middle leaders. I met with six governors, including the chair of governors. Together we visited mathematics lessons in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. We also carried out a learning walk in Reception and in Years 1 and 2. We looked at a sample of books from all classes. I had a discussion with six Year 6 pupils. I considered the 49 responses submitted by parents through Parents View, the online inspection questionnaire.